

ART. XVI.—*Notes on Certain of the Initiation Ceremonies  
of the Arunta Tribe, Central Australia.*

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In a previous communication to this Society we have already dealt with the Engwurra ceremony as performed by the Arunta tribe.<sup>1</sup> In the report of the work of the Horn Expedition to Central Australia one of us has also given a short account of certain of the initiation ceremonies, a more detailed description of which is included in the present paper. It must, however, be understood that the details of the ceremonies vary to a certain extent in different localities even within the limits of the one tribe, and the following account may be regarded as including the more important ones which are characteristic of the various ceremonies as they are conducted in particular localities.

It may be said that every Australian native, with possibly rare exceptions as in the case of the Wótjo-bálluk tribe of the Wimmera district, Victoria, described by Mr. Howitt,<sup>2</sup> has, in the normal condition of the tribe, to pass through certain ceremonies of initiation before he is admitted to the secrets of the tribe and regarded as a fully developed member of it.

In the case of the tribes inhabiting the east and south-eastern coastal districts of the continent the ceremonies appear to be entirely distinct from those of the tribes of the central area amongst whom they are very elaborate and spread over a long

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<sup>1</sup> Proc. R. S. Vict., vol. x. (New Series), Pt. I., p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Journal of Anthropol. Inst. London, May, 1885, p. 301.

series of years, the first taking place at about the age of ten or twelve years whilst the final and most impressive one—that is the Engwurra—is not passed through until probably the black-fellow has reached the age of at least twenty-five or even thirty.

In the Arunta tribe the ceremonies of initiation are four in number:—

- (1) Painting and throwing the boy up.
- (2) Circumcision or Lartna.
- (3) Subincision or Ariltha.
- (4) The Engwurra or fire ceremony.

One of the most noticeable features of these ceremonies, from a negative point of view, is the absence of the knocking out of teeth as a general custom associated with the initiatory rites. Amongst many tribes of the eastern coastal district this forms a prominent feature, but amongst the Central Australian natives whilst it may be performed it has nothing whatever to do with initiation and is in fact practised by women as well as by men, the rite having at the present day no “sacred” significance of any kind. Amongst certain local groups, as for example the natives living in the district now known as Bond Springs, a short distance to the north-east of Alice Springs, it is much more widely practised than elsewhere, but speaking generally the knocking out of teeth is a matter partly of individual and partly of local taste and fashion.<sup>1</sup> Possibly the custom may be regarded as one which was at some long-past time prevalent amongst the common ancestors of the central and eastern tribes, but has undergone changes as the tribes became separated from one another and developed, so far as their customs are concerned, along different lines. In some it has retained its old significance but in others, as for example all those inhabiting the central area, it has lost its earlier meaning, its place has been taken by other rites and now it is merely what may be called a “rudimentary custom.”

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<sup>1</sup> It is, however, attended with the performance of definite ceremonies, and has evidently at one time been of greater importance than it is at present.

### The First Ceremony.—Throwing the Boy up.

The first ceremony amongst the Arunta tribe takes place when, at all events in the northern part of the tribe, a boy is between ten and twelve years of age. The men, and also the women, assemble at a spot near to the main camp and the boys who have reached the right age are taken one by one and tossed in the air several times by the men who catch them as they fall while the women dance round and round swinging their arms about and shouting "pow" "pow" "powa-a-a," the last cry being very prolonged. When this is over the boys are painted on their chests and backs with simple designs, consisting of straight or curved bands outlined by lines of red or yellow ochre. So far as we can discover these have no special significance, they certainly have no reference to either the class<sup>1</sup> or totem of the boys.<sup>2</sup> The painting of each boy is done by one or more men who stand to him in the relationship of "umbirna," that is a man who is the brother of a woman of the class from which his, *i.e.*, the boy's, wife must come. The design is called "Enchübichika," and while being painted the boys are told that the ceremony through which they have just passed will promote their future growth to manhood, and they are told by tribal fathers and elder brothers that in future they must not play with the women and girls, nor must they camp as they have hitherto done with them but must henceforth go to the camp of the younger and unmarried men which is known as the "Ungunja." Up to this time they have been accustomed to go out with the women as they searched for vegetable food and the smaller animals such as lizards and rats, now they begin to accompany the men in their search for larger game and begin also to look forward to the

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term "class" in reference to the intermarrying, exogamous divisions of the tribe.

<sup>2</sup> In all the ceremonies of initiation the youth or man has certain designs painted on his body, and in no case have they any reference of necessity to his own totem though they are emblematic of some totem with which usually the man who does the painting is associated. These designs come under the general term of "Ilkinia" the name applied to the series of designs which are emblematic of the various totems and, so long as the boy, youth or man has one or other of these painted on, it does not signify which. It must be remembered that the man who does the painting is the person who decides upon the nature of the design. It may also be noted that in the performance of sacred ceremonies men are constantly decorated with designs belonging to totems other than their own.

time when they will become fully initiated and admitted to all the secrets of the tribe which are as yet kept hidden from them.

The ceremony of throwing up is called "Alkirakiwūma"<sup>1</sup> and very shortly after this the boy has his nasal septum bored through, usually by his father or paternal grandfather, and begins to wear the nose bone. This boring is practised by men and women alike and the operation is not attended with any special ceremony. Amongst the women the boring is usually done by the husband immediately after marriage and, it may be remarked in passing, that in both sexes the constant wearing of the nose bone emphasises the flattening out of the lobes of the nose.

A good many years may elapse between the throwing-up ceremony and the performance of the two much more important ceremonies of circumcision or Lartna and that of subincision or Ariltha. Speaking generally it may be said that circumcision may take place at any age after the boy has arrived at puberty. Up to this time he is spoken of as "Ulpmerka," after the two ceremonies have been performed he becomes an "Ertwa-kurka"—that is an initiated man eligible to take a wife and to be admitted to all the tribal secrets, though it may be many years before he is instructed in certain of them.

### The Second Ceremony.—Circumcision or Lartna.

When it has been decided by the boy's elder male relatives (usually his elder brothers blood and tribal) that he has arrived at the proper age, preparations are made, unknown to the Ulpmerka, for the ceremony. These consist first of all in the gathering together of a large supply of food material, for the ceremonies are attended with the performance of what are usually spoken of as corroborees, which last over several days.

In the following account<sup>2</sup> which deals with the ceremony as enacted by the natives living on the banks of the Finke near to a spot called Undiara, one of the most important local centres

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<sup>1</sup> Derived from Alkira, the sky, and wuma, to throw.

<sup>2</sup> In certain respects the details of the ceremony now described differ from those of the ceremony already described by one of us in the Report of the Horn Expedition. This is owing to the fact that the details vary to a considerable extent in different localities.

of the kangaroo totem, we omit certain details which would necessitate for their proper understanding too lengthy a reference to traditions dealing with the past history of the tribe. In the performance of every ceremony the Arunta native is bound hand and foot by tradition, what his fore-fathers did that he must likewise do, and in connection with every custom, however trivial, he has some tradition telling him exactly how he must act and what he must do.

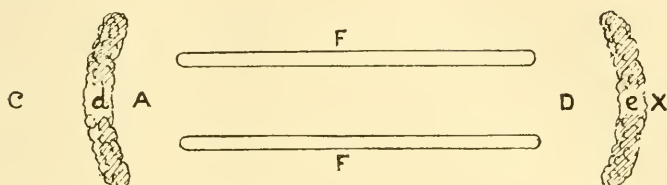
We may, however, very briefly refer here as follows to certain of the traditions which have reference to the ceremonies of initiation; a full account of them will be published subsequently.

The earliest period to which any tradition refers is always spoken of by the natives as the "Alcheringa." At the very beginning of this, so says tradition, there were no true human beings such as now exist but only "Inapertwa,"<sup>1</sup> that is almost shapeless beings in which just the vague outlines of the different limbs and parts of the body could be detected. Two spirit beings who lived far away in the western sky and who were called "Ungambikulla," a word which signifies "made out of nothing," or "self-existing," came down to earth and transformed the Inapertwa creatures into men and women, and further they performed upon some but not all of them the rite of circumcision, using for the performance of the operation a fire-stick. It is worthy of note that this tradition of the early use of the fire-stick is widely spread through the various divisions of the Arunta tribe. At a slightly later period, but in the Alcheringa, certain ancestral individuals who belonged to the Ullakupera, or little hawk totem, introduced the practice of performing the operation by means of a stone knife. Shortly after this, individuals belonging to the Achilpa, or "wild cat" totem, introduced the rite of Ariltha or subincision.

It will be seen from this, which is the briefest possible outline of lengthy traditions dealing with the subject, that the traditions of the tribe refer to three distinct and successive periods: (1) one in which circumcision was practised by means of a fire-stick, (2) one in which the use of the stone knife was introduced, and (3) a later period when subincision was introduced.

<sup>1</sup> In the Report of the Horn Expedition, vol. iv., p. 185, this word was by mistake written "Inaperlwa." The spelling and account now given are correct.

At the present day the operation of circumcision is always performed at a specially prepared spot to which the name of "Apulla" is given. The nature of this can be seen from the accompanying plan.



A path about five feet wide is cleared of grass and shrubs and the surface soil is heaped up on either side so as to form a low narrow bank (FF) of the same length as the path. The latter is always made so that it runs east and west. At a distance of about fifty yards from either end a small brake of boughs is made (d, e).

When all has been properly prepared the youth to be initiated is seized early during the evening, while he is at the Ungunja or camp of the men. This seizing of the youth is the duty of men who stand in a certain definite relationship to him, viz., that of (1) Okilia, or elder brothers, (2) Umbirna, or brothers of his future wife, (3) Unkulla, or sons of his mother's brothers.<sup>1</sup> As soon as they lay hands on him they shout loudly "Utchai," "Utchai." Not infrequently the youth, thoroughly frightened, struggles violently and tries to escape in which case he is simply carried off bodily to the Apulla ground. Once on the ground and in the presence of all the men and women who have assembled there he makes no further resistance but seems to resign himself to his fate. The men are gathered together at the eastern end of the Apulla close by the brake at the spot marked A in the diagram, while the women are at the spot marked C.

<sup>1</sup> In the northern part of the tribe all the men and women assemble at the Apulla ground while the boy is asleep, and then three men and two young women are sent to awake and bring him in. The women carry shallow "pitchis" or wooden bowls, with which, after creeping quietly up to him, they strike him sharply at the same time crying out loudly "Utchai." Then the three men seize and carry him off.

The youth who is as yet spoken of as Ulpmerka, that is an uncircumcised boy, sits down amongst the men while the women who have been awaiting his arrival at once begin to dance, carrying shields in their hands. The reason assigned for this is that, in the Alcheringa, certain women called Unthippa carried along with them, as they travelled over the country, a number of young boys who were just being initiated. As they travelled along they also carried shields, dancing the whole time, and therefore it is that, at the present day, the initiation ceremony must commence with an imitation of the Unthippa dance of the Alcheringa. Except upon this one occasion women never carry shields, which are exclusively the property of the men. While the women are dancing the men sing of the marching of the Unthippa women across the country, and after the boy has watched and listened for some little time his head is covered with strands of fur string so as to give it the appearance of being encased in a tightly fitting skull cap. A large Uliara, or human-hair girdle, is also placed round his waist by a man who is Gammona, that is mother's brother to him, the girdle itself being provided by a man who is Oknia<sup>1</sup> or "father" of the boy.

When this has been done a consultation of the men who are Oknia and Okilia to the boy is held, and certain other men are told off by them to take the boy away and paint him. These men are always afterwards called Wntyua or Wilya by the boy. After the consultation is over they go away and, first of all, build a brake of bushes at the western end of the Apulla, after which they return and, taking the boy, lead him through the dancing women to the brake, where some time is spent in greasing his body and decorating him with a pinkish coloured clay and lines of bird's down. When this is over the Wilya men tell the boy that he is no longer an Ulpmerka but is now a Wurtja, that during the proceedings about to follow, he must render implicit obedience and on no account must he ever tell any woman or boy anything of what he is about to see. Should he ever reveal any of the secrets both he and his closest relations will surely die. He is not to speak until spoken to and even

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<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that we have no equivalent expressions in English for the native terms of relationship; thus, for example, Oknia includes not only the man whom we call father but also all the men who were eligible as husbands for the boy's mother.

then only in a subdued voice ; when left at his brake—that is the one at which the painting has been done—he must always crouch down and on no account attempt to see what the men are doing. Should he try to see what is going on at the Apulla, except when taken there and told to watch, some calamity will happen to him—Twanyirika, the great spirit, whose voice is heard when the bullroarers speak, will carry him away. When these instructions have been given to him by the Wilya, some Okilia come to him and repeat them over and over again. After this he is left entirely alone behind his brake at the spot marked X for an hour or two while the singing and dancing are continued with vigour. Meanwhile the Oknia and Okilia again consult and choose a man who is Mura to the boy to act as what is called “Urinthantima.” Towards daylight the boy, now called Wurtja, is brought back to the men from his brake, passing through the group of women who have not yet ceased dancing, and is placed upon the lap of the Urinthantima man.

The boy’s mother has previously brought from her camp a fire-stick which she is careful to keep alight all night. In the early morning she lights a fire with this and then lights two long sticks with which she has provided herself. These she holds in her hands as she sits behind the Urinthantima, one she hands to the Tūalcha-mūra woman<sup>1</sup> of the boy and the other she retains and takes back with her to camp where she is most careful to guard it constantly and to keep it alight. It is fixed into the ground at an angle so as to catch the wind. The Wurtja guards his fire in just the same way, and is cautioned by the men with him that if he loses it or allows it to go out he and his mother will be killed by Kurdaitcha. On the day on which he is led back to the Apulla he throws away the fire-stick as also does his mother.

While the men are singing a special fire song, the woman who is Tūalcha-mūra to the boy approaches and ties round his neck bands of fur-string after which she hands to him the fire-stick which she has received from the boy’s mother. The latter has taken up a position along with the sisters of the boy’s father immediately behind the Urinthantima man. The woman tells

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<sup>1</sup> The Tualcha-mura is the woman whose daughter, born or unborn, has been allotted to the boy as a future wife, so that she is potentially his mother-in-law.



the boy to always hold fast to his own fire—in other words not to interfere with the women who have been allotted to other men. After this, and at a signal from an old Okilia, the Wurtja gets up and runs away followed by a number of shouting boys who after a short time return and, along with the women, leave the Apulla ground and run back to the main camp.

The Wurtja is accompanied by some Okilia and Unkulla men who remain out with him in the bush for usually three days. During this time nothing of any special nature happens to him beyond the fact that he may not speak unless spoken to, and that he is not allowed to eat freely, though he is not as yet bound by the food restrictions which he will very shortly have to obey. The main object of this partial seclusion is to impress him with the fact that he is about to enter into the ranks of the men, and to mark the break between his old life and the new one; he has no precise knowledge of what is in store for him and the sense of something out of the ordinary being about to happen to him—something moreover which is of a more or less mysterious nature—helps to impress him strongly with a feeling of the deep importance of strict compliance with the tribal rules and further still with a strong sense of the superiority of the older men who know and are familiar with all the mysterious rites, some of which he is about to learn the meaning of for the first time.

When brought back to the Apulla, the Wurtja is placed first of all behind the brake at the west end of the ground from where he may not move without the permission of his Okilia. The Apulla ground is in charge of a man who is an Oknia of the boy. On this, the fourth night, the men spend the time, hour after hour, singing of the marching of the Ullakupera men in the Alcheringa, and of their operations with their celebrated Lalira or stone knives. Every now and then they break out into the Ullakupera Iartna song:

“Iriyulta yulta rai  
Ul katchera ulkatcherrai.”

Which is always sung in fierce, loud tones. About midnight two Okilia go to the Wurtja and having blindfolded him bring him to the group of men where he is made to lie, face downwards on the ground, until two men who are to about to perform

a ceremony are in position between the lines of the Apulla. The quabarra<sup>1</sup> which they are about to perform is one of a certain number which are only performed at times such as this when initiation is taking place. When the boy is told to look up he sees lying in front of him and on his side a decorated man, whom the Oknia and Okilia, both speaking at once, tell him represents a wild-dog. At the other end of the Apulla another decorated man stands with his legs stretched wide apart and holding twigs of eucalyptus in each hand; his head is decorated with a small ornament called a Waninga to which further reference will be made subsequently. The performer moves his head from side to side as if looking for something and every now and then utters a sound similar to that made by a kangaroo, which animal he represents. Suddenly the dog looks up, sees the kangaroo and begins to bark. Running along on all fours he passes between the legs of the kangaroo man who strikes him with the twigs, after which he lies down again for a minute or two behind the kangaroo who keeps watching him over his shoulder while he utters the sound. Then the dog gets up, runs from behind between the kangaroo's legs, is caught by the head, shaken, and howls as if in pain while a pretence is made of dashing his head upon the ground. This is repeated several times and finally the dog is supposed to be killed by the kangaroo. Then the dog runs quickly on all fours to the Wurtja and lies down on the top of him; he is at once followed by the kangaroo who hops on to the top of the dog and so the Wurtja has to bear the weight of both men for about two minutes. When they get up, the Wurtja, still lying down, is told by the old men that the quabarra represents an incident which took place in the Alcheringa when a wild dog man attacked a kangaroo man and was killed by the latter. The object which the kangaroo wore on his head was, he is told, a Waninga, a sacred object, the name of which must never be mentioned in the hearing of women or children, and that, in fact, it represents a kangaroo. When this is over the Wurtja is led back to his brake and the men continue singing at intervals nearly all night.

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<sup>1</sup> Quabarra is the term applied by the Arunta natives to sacred ceremonies which only initiated men may witness.

The quabarra which are performed at these initiation ceremonies vary according to the locality in which they are being performed and the men who are taking the leading part in them. If, for example, the old man who is presiding belongs to the Emu totem then the quabarra will, at all events to a certain extent, represent incidents concerned with ancestral Emu men. In the particular ceremony upon which the present account is based, the old man presiding belonged to the Kangaroo totem and thus quabarra concerned especially with this totem were much in evidence. The totem of the youth who is being initiated has no influence whatever on the nature of the particular quabarra performed. Each old man who presides over, or takes a leading part in, a ceremony such as this has possession of a certain number of quabarra and naturally those performed are chosen from this series. Remembering, therefore, that the particular quabarra vary from ceremony to ceremony, the account now given may be regarded as representing in essential features the details of the initiation ceremony of circumcision amongst the Arunta tribe. At the same time it is also necessary to remember that ceremonial objects, such as the Waninga, which figure largely in some districts are unknown in others where their place is taken by entirely different objects. Thus, for example, in the northern part of the tribe a sacred pole called a Nurtunga is used and this, where it is used, has precisely the significance of the Waninga which is never met with in the northern districts. For an outline of an initiation ceremony in which the Nurtunga is used reference may be made to the account already written by one of us in connection with the ceremony of subincision amongst the northern Arunta.<sup>1</sup>

On the next day another quabarra is performed, this time by two kangaroo men and one man representing a dog. Once more the dog is killed (it may be mentioned here that in similar ceremonies associated with the wild-dog totem it is the kangaroo which is killed), finally the three men throw themselves on top of the Wurtja, after which the latter is once more told by the old men what the ceremony means and is again taken back to the brake at the western end of the Apulla.

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<sup>1</sup> Report of Horn Expedition to Central Australia, vol. iv., p. 173.

On the sixth day the Wurtja is taken out hunting by Okilia and Umbirna, and the succeeding night is spent by the men in singing songs, to which the Wurtja listens and which have reference to the wanderings of certain Alcheringa ancestors.

We have in our previous account of the Engwurra ceremony<sup>1</sup> dealt briefly with the traditions which are concerned with the wanderings of various groups of individuals and have described the connection of these with the totemic system as developed in the Arunta tribe. Up to the time of his initiation the youth has known nothing of these traditions and now for the first time he hears of them and sees the ceremonies performed in which the ancestors of the tribe are represented decorated as they were, and acting as they did, during life. In various accounts of initiation ceremonies of the Australian tribes, as for example, in the earliest one ever published—the one written by Collins in 1804—we meet with descriptions of performances in which different animals are represented but, except in the case of the Arunta tribe, no indication of the meaning and significance of these performances has been yet forthcoming. In the Arunta tribe however they are seen to have a very definite meaning and to be intimately associated with the totemic system. Whether this be so in other tribes we have as yet no evidence to show, but it is, at all events, worthy of note that, whilst the actual initiation rite varies much from tribe to tribe, consisting in some in the knocking out of a tooth, and in others in circumcision, etc., in all an important part of the ceremony consists in showing to the novitiates certain dances, the important and common feature of which is that they represent the actions of particular animals. In the Arunta tribe however they have a very definite meaning. At the first glance it looks much as if all that they were intended to represent was merely the behaviour of certain animals but in reality they have a much deeper meaning, for each performer represents an ancestral individual who lived in the Alcheringa. He was a member of a group of individuals, all of whom, just like himself, were the direct descendants or transformations of the animals, the names of which they respectively bear. It is as a re-incarnation of the never-dying spirit part of one of these semi-

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<sup>1</sup> Proc. R.S. Vict., vol. x., pt. i., p. 17.

animal ancestors that every member of the tribe is born, and therefore when born, he or she, bears of necessity the name of the animal, or plant, of which the alcheringa ancestor was a transformation or descendant.

The nature of these performances may be gathered from one which was, in this instance, enacted on the seventh day. As usual in all these performances the man's body is decorated with ochre and lines of bird's down, which is supposed to be arranged in exactly the same way in which it had been on the body of the Alcheringa man. From the waist is suspended a large ball of fur-string which is supposed to represent the scrotum of the kangaroo, and when all is ready, the performer, who has been decorated behind the brake where the men sit, comes out hopping leisurely along as a kangaroo does, and every now and then lying down like the animal on his side to rest. The boy, as before, has been brought, blindfolded, on to the ground and at first is made to lie flat down, but, when the performer hops out, he is told to sit up and watch. The performer for about ten minutes goes through the characteristic movements of the animal, acting the part very cleverly, while the men sitting around the Wurtja sing of the wandering of the kangaroos across the country in the Alcheringa. Then after a final and very leisurely hop round the Apulla ground the man comes and lies down on top of the Wurtja who is then instructed in the tradition to which the performance refers. He is told that in the Alcheringa a party of kangaroo-men started out from a place called Ultainta away out to the east of what is now called Charlotte Waters, and that after wandering about they came at last to a spot called Karinga, far away to the north in the Macdonnell Ranges, where one of the party who was named Unburtcha died, that is his body did but the spirit part of him was in a sacred Churinga which he carried, and did not die but remained behind when the party travelled on. This spirit, the old men tell him, went at a later time into a woman and was born again as a Purula man, whose sacred name was of course Unburtcha, and who was a kangaroo-man just as his ancestor was. He is told that the old men know everything about these matters and decide which ancestor it is who has come to life again in the form of a man or woman. Sometimes the spirit child which goes into a woman is one which

was associated with one of the sacred Churinga, numbers of which each Alcheringa individual carried about with him or her, for in those days the women were allowed to carry the Churinga just like the men, and then, in this case, the child has no definite name but, of course, it belongs to the same group as did the man who had carried the Churinga about in the Alcheringa, that is if he were a kangaroo-man so must the child be, and then the old men determine what shall be his secret or sacred name.

It is in this way that the boy during the initiation ceremonies is instructed for the first time in any of the sacred matters referring to the totems, and it is by means of the performances which are concerned with certain animals or rather, apparently with the animals, but in reality with Alcheringa individuals who were the direct transformations of such animals, that the traditions which deal with this subject which is of the greatest importance in the eyes of the native, are firmly impressed upon the mind of the novice to whom everything which he sees and hears is new and surrounded with an air of mystery.

After the completion of this kangaroo ceremony the Wurtja is taken back to his brake, and then a consultation of the Okilia and Oknia is held for the purpose of selecting a man to perform the operation and also a man to assist the chief operator. Both these men are called "Atwia-twia," and in addition to them a man is selected whose duty it is to hold up the shield upon which the boy is seated during the operation, this man being known by the name of "Elucha." The conversation is carried on in whispers, the men when speaking placing their mouths against each other's ears. While this consultation is in progress, the other men sitting close to the brake sing in fierce, loud tones, the Ullakupera Lartna song—"Iriyulta yulta rai, etc."

After some little discussion it is decided that an old man who is Mura to the boy is to act as "Atwia-twia," and that a man who is Gammona to him is to act as his assistant, his duty consisting in pulling forward the fore-skin, while another old man who is Ikuntira<sup>1</sup> to the boy is to be the shield bearer or Elucha. It must be remembered that in addition to the honour attaching to these offices there are certain emoluments, for when the operation is all over the boy has to provide each of these men with an offering of food.

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<sup>1</sup> Ikuntira is the name given to actual or tribal fathers-in-law.

As soon as the decision has been made the singing stops, and the men arrange themselves in a line in front of the brake while the three Okilia sit opposite to them at the end of the path looking especially grave as if the business now to be performed were of the deepest importance.

Each one of the three now gets up in turn and leads forwards one of the appointed officials, who all make a show of reluctance, and places him in front of the row of men who are seated in a line beside the Apulla so that now there are two rows of men facing one another. The old Mūra man sits in the middle of his row and opposite to him is the oldest of the Okilia. The latter with his hand smooths the surface of the ground between the two lines and then, picking up a spear-thrower by the end to which the point is attached, he thrusts his beard into his mouth, as does also the Mūra man, and both glare fiercely at each other. Then without taking his eyes off the Mūra man he scoops up, with the chisel end of the spear-thrower, a little soil, and gliding along on his knees empties it into the hands of the former. Then he embraces him, rubs their bodies together and finally rubs his forehead against the stomach of the Mūra man. After this he repeats the whole performance with the two other officials, and when this is over the three old men are embraced in the same way by the other Okilia, who however do not present them with dirt.

The meaning of the latter ceremony is to imply that the youth is intrusted to them for the purpose of being initiated, with as little hesitation as the dirt is placed in their hands.

This little ceremony is called "Okoara" and is conducted with much solemnity. When it is over the men join the others and once more the Lartna song is sung with much fierceness. Singing is kept up all night with short intervals; the Wurtja is brought from his brake early in the evening and sits the night long amongst the men listening to, but taking no part in, the singing.

The morning of the eighth day is spent in preparing for a ceremony concerned with the "Illuta" (a rat) totem. The particular rat-man or man-rat, for, as already said, the identity of the human individual is sunk in that of the object with he is associated and from which he is supposed to have originated,

to whom this ceremony refers is reported to have travelled in the Alcheringa from a place called Pulkira west of the Finke River to Walyirra, where he died and where his spirit remained, associated as usual with a ehuringa. In connection with this ceremony a large Waninga is made. This consists of a spear, across which, close to each end, a short bar of wood is attached; strands of human hair string pass along from bar to bar, closely side by side and at each end pass off slant-wise towards the central spear. The whole structure is supposed to represent the body of a rat. The main part is supposed to be the trunk of the animal, the point end of the spear is the tail, and the handle end is the head. The Waninga is carried by one of the Okilia men while another man walks behind to steady it. Two other men are decorated so as to represent two "Kutta Kutta" or little night hawks. When all is ready the Wurtja is led, blindfolded of course, to where the main body of men are seated. The performers approach from the south side making a circuit and walking with their backs towards the Apulla until they are opposite and about thirty yards away from the Wurtja when the bandage is quickly taken from the eyes of the latter. Then the two "Kutta Kutta" men with both legs stretched wide apart and hands holding a stick across their shoulders, come along between the lines of the Apulla with a curious quick, gliding movement, towards the audience and then rapidly retire. Then the men with the Waninga run down the lines, stopping every now and then as they bend the Waninga over towards the Wurtja but without touching him; then they stand erect and perform the quivering movement which is such a characteristic feature in all the native ceremonies. This is done several times and finally all four performers come into the Apulla lines at the same time, the "Kutta Kutta" men being at first in front, then they retire to the side and the men bearing the Waninga come on close to the Wurtja when a man steps out of the audience, touches the performers and the ceremony comes to an end. Then a man who is an Ikuntira, that is a possible father-in-law, to the Wurtja takes the Waninga and fixes it upright in the Apulla path, and the Wurtja is told by the Oknia and Okilia men, who, as usual, sit close to him during the performance, to go out and embrace the Waninga which he does for some minutes, the



Waniga carriers standing close by and the men at the brake singing of the Waniga and of the walking of the Illuta in the Aleheringa. Then the Wurtja is told to lie down again and his head is covered over, the usual instructions and cautions being given to him. During this time another ceremony is being prepared of a simple description as no decoration is used. The men occupy the time in singing about a party of Aleheringa individuals who started to walk from a place called Ayaiya. After the singing has gone on for about an hour the Wurtja is told to look up and he sees a number of men lying about the Apulla ground; as he looks up they begin to hop about and to utter the sounds made by kangaroos. One old man in particular is noticeable from the way in which he imitates the movements of an old disabled animal. After hopping in and about the Apulla for some minutes they bunch up together at the western end of the ground and then suddenly rising with a loud shout of "pow, pow, pow," they run away to a small gully out of sight of the Wurtja who is told that these men represent a party of Aleheringa kangaroo-men starting off from Ayaiya. After this and while further preparations are being made the Wurtja remains with the audience but has his head covered. The tradition dealing with this special group of kangaroos relates that the party split into two, a larger and a smaller one, and that the larger one travelled on ahead of the other one. When preparing for the ceremony the bodies are first of all rubbed all over with red ochre, then two young men open veins, first in one arm and then in the other, and allow the blood to flow out in a stream over the heads and bodies of the men who are about to perform. The latter who are ten in number are then ornamented with little patches of down but, unlike the usual plan of ornamentation, there is no regular pattern made, the reason for this being that the Aleheringa men had not used any regular pattern.

When all are ready, they go, with the exception of three who stay behind, on to the Apulla walking in single file and carrying twigs of Eucalyptus in their hands. When they reach the ground a young man who leads the column and represents a young and frolicsome kangaroo which, according to tradition, accompanied the marchers, lies down sideways across the entrance to the path with his back turned towards the Wurtja. The

other men stand in the path with their legs wide apart shifting their heads from side to side and making the twigs quiver. Then the Wurtja is told to sit up and the performers at once greet his appearance with imitations of the sounds made by kangaroos; then the young kangaroo, called "Kulla Kulla," begins frisking about pretending to rush at the other performers, and finally darts between the legs of each man and emerges at the western end of the column where he lies down quietly for a minute or two. After he has done this four times he is caught up as he comes through the legs of the man who stands nearest to the Wurtja and is carried up to the latter and placed upon him and then all the other performers throw themselves upon the top of him so that the Wurtja has actually to bear the whole mass of men. (The Wurtja himself on this particular occasion did not appear to be any the worse for this trying experience, but one of the performers fainted as soon as they extricated themselves. The stoical calmness of the young Wurtja was most marked throughout the whole ceremony). The performers then seat themselves amongst the audience and the remaining three men then come on and go through the same performance, one of them personating a young kangaroo as before. The latter is again laid on top of the Wurtja and the other two men lie on the top of him. For this lying down on the top of the novitiate there is a special term—"wulthachelpima." After the usual explanations and cautions the Wurtja is again led back to his own brake by his Okilia. During the evening when the men are assembled at the Apulla he is brought back and lying down listens to the singing which continues with little interruption during the whole night.

On the morning of the ninth day the Wurtja is carefully greased all over by the elder Okilia in whose special charge he is and remains crouching or lying down at his brake until noon when he is blindfolded and brought to the Apulla. Then the kangaroo performance of the previous day is again enacted, the performance including the lying down upon the Wurtja. After this two more kangaroo ceremonies are performed the second of which is of some importance. The principal performer carries a large Waninga on the top of which a smaller one is attached, the large one representing a full grown kangaroo, and the

smaller one a young one. As on a previous occasion the Waninga is taken by a man who is Ikuntira to the Wurtja and fixed in the ground and then the latter is told by his Oknia and Okilia to go and embrace it which he does for some minutes, the performers meanwhile standing round. The showing of the Waninga to the Wurtja is called "umba-keli-irrima" which means "the child sees and knows." The embracing of the Waninga is called "eliaqua erkuma." After the performance the Wurtja is once more instructed as to what the Waninga means, and cautioned not to reveal anything to women or to uninitiated boys; then as usual he is made to lie down and in fierce tones the men sing the Lartna song—"Iriyulta yulta," striking the ground with their shields. Then the Wurtja is taken back to his brake where he remains until about nine o'clock at night when he is brought to the Apulla and there his head is decorated with stalks of cane grass, while at the same time the other men decorate themselves in the same way and in addition have stalks inserted beneath their arm bands.

When this has been done the brake of boughs at which the men assemble is built higher and the men all crouch behind it. Then at a signal from an Oknia the women approach shouting as they do so "pai! pai! pai," and taking possession of the Apulla ground, dance upon it for some minutes and then leaving the Apulla go to one side when the men come out and stand on the Apulla. The women then come and join the men who dance round while the women pluck the grass stalks from their heads, shouting as they do so, "pai! pai! pai!" While this is going on the men all dance with their faces turned towards the east as in the stripping dance at a later time, one or more women behind each man. The mura woman, who is called "unchalkulkna," after stripping the Wurtja who has been dancing amongst the other men, suddenly stops and placing her head through his legs from behind hoists him on to her shoulders and runs off with him followed by all the other women, to a spot behind and in a line with the Apulla from which it is distant about fifty yards. Here she places him sitting on the ground and then sits behind clasping him in her arms, some Mias and Uwinnas sitting close behind her. The other women continue to dance in front of the Wurtja shouting, "pai! pai! pai!" and making a movement of invitation

by slightly lifting the hands up and down, with the arms bent at the elbow, in a way often adopted during various ceremonies.

At the Apulla the men sit down and sing the fire song :—

“Atnylinga etunja illa althara wuntama,”

over and over again. Atnylinga is the red flower of a species of *Eremophila* which in the Alcheringa was made red by much burning, Etunja is a twig of *Eucalyptus*, Althara means blazing up, and Illa wuntama is the term applied to a fire which is rushing along. This song is always sung on the night preceding the preparation of the Arachitta poles, the twigs used for swathing which are always put through a blazing fire. The singing continues for about half-an-hour, after which the Urinthantima man as well as another mūra man, and also an Okilia, run to the lubras holding shields before their faces. The first-named seizes the Wurtja, and assisted by the other two takes him back to the Apulla, where he is told to lie down and his face is covered, while the singing of the fire song continues at intervals all night long. As soon as the Wurtja is taken from them the women run away to their camp.

At daybreak the Urinthantima man rubs the Wurtja all over with dry red ochre and then winds fur-string round his head so as to completely hide his hair from sight while the other men sing :—

“Purta purta airpinta airpintima,”

The song sung while preparing the Arachitta poles. Purta purta is to arrange the leaves, to settle them in their places ; Airpinta airpintima means round and round again. While this is being sung the women come up to the Apulla and dance up the lines towards the Wurtja making with their hands the movement of invitation and shouting, “pai ! pai ! pai !” Suddenly the Urinthantima man hoists the Wurtja up on his shoulders and runs off with him followed by a number of the younger men upon which the women at once run back to their camp and the singing ceases. When out of sight of the Apulla the Wurtja is put down and the men proceed to a spot about half-a-mile away from the Apulla where they make large fires and cut down a number of slender sapplings which are to be used for Arachitta poles. The branches are scorched in the flames while the men sing the fire

song:—"Atnylinga etunja, etc." When sufficient material has been secured they sit down and begin to tie twigs on to the poles, the men singing, incessantly, "Purta purta airpinta airpintima." When the poles, about thirty in number—each of them about ten feet long—are ready, which is about noon, the men start back for the Apulla carrying the poles with them. These they place in a heap about two hundred yards from the Apulla, and then the Urinthantima man assisted by an Okilia ties twigs of Eremophila round the boy's body and on to his head—this being done where the sticks have been deposited. A signal is communicated to the men at the Apulla who then move away and shout to the women who are waiting some little distance off and who then approach at a run carrying shields in front of them and shouting as they come along, "pai! pai! pai!" They take up a position one behind the other with their backs to the Apulla brake and their faces turned towards the west from which direction the Wurtja's party is coming. As the latter approach the women begin to dance up and down the lines making with their right hands the movement of invitation and with their left hands holding their shields against their breasts. The Wurtja party approaches at a run, the Wurtja himself being concealed in the centre, each man carrying several pieces of bark which are thrown at the women while the men shout loudly, "Whirra!" and the women shield their faces. When close to the Apulla the men fire a final volley and the women run away, pell mell, their pace accelerated by the vehement shouting of the men who are standing about in all directions away from the Apulla to which they return as soon as the women have gone. The bushes are taken off the Wurtja by the Urinthantima and Okilia and he is told to remain in a crouching position.

The Apulla ground is now carefully cleaned and the Wurtja's brake shifted to within a few yards of the western end after which a council, in which Okilia, Oknia and Gammona take part, is held at the eastern end for the purpose of appointing a man to act as "Wulya," his duty being to paint a design upon the back of the Wurtja, the choice of the design resting with the Wulya who is supposed to choose one of those which are called "Ilkinia," that is a design belonging to a totem and emblematic of the latter. He is also supposed to choose one of

a totem group of his own locality. During this conference two Okilia men have been sitting opposite to each other, and as soon as the choice has been made one of them smoothes the ground between them and then the other, who in this instance belonged to the same locality as the Wurtja, crosses over and sits down between the legs of the first man. Then a Gammona man of the Wurtja's locality steps out and brings back an old man who is Ipmunna to the Wurtja and upon whom the choice has fallen. He comes with well simulated reluctance as if he felt himself overpowered with the honour thus conferred upon him and sits down in front of the Okilias, the front one of whom takes up a boomerang and with much deliberation draws the flat side three times steadily along the ground making thus a smooth little trench out of which he scoops a little soil, and then shuffling along on his knees empties it into the hands of the Ipmunna man. Then he embraces him and rubs his forehead and face against the old man's stomach. Then the other Okilia, the Gammona and Okuia, in the order named, embrace the old man in the same way. The latter belongs to a northern locality, and in choosing him a well recognised compliment has been paid to the group to which he belongs. The old Atwia-twia who had previously been chosen to perform the operation of circumcision now comes up and holds a whispered conversation with the newly appointed Wulya saying that he is an old man, that his sight is failing and that he does not feel equal to the task, and asks that his son may be allowed to act in his stead. This is agreed to and then the son is called up, and after another whispered conversation on the subject the meeting breaks up and all the men begin to decorate themselves in various colours, the designs having no special significance. The two Atwia-twia are, however, prominently painted on the face, and their cheeks are blackened with charcoal.

After the Wurtja has been crouching at his brake for some time with his face turned towards the Apulla, the Wulya comes and begins to paint a design upon his back. The design in this instance is one associated with the Okranina (carpet snake) of a locality called Tharlinga, a northern locality, and represents a number of snakes around their hole which is indicated by a series of concentric circles.

The Wulya first of all rubs the body of the Wurtja all over with fat and then explains to the other men what he intends to draw after which he proceeds to work with great deliberation, more than an hour being spent over the drawing, while two old Ipmunna men keep up a low monotonous chant, the words of which have reference to the snakes (*i.e.* the ancestral snake-men) of Tharlinga. When the design is at last complete, an Okilia of the Wurtja's locality comes up and places two bunches of owl's feathers in his hair and then goes away and brings the Atwiawtia to inspect the design. The men who have previously made the Arachitta poles then run away from the Apulla shouting "pai! pai! pai!" and bring them in. When within about fifty yards of the Wurtja they separate into two parties, one of them crosses in front of the Wurtja from left to right and deposits their poles twenty yards to the right of him, while the others do the same on the left side. No explanation of this can be given except the usual one that it has always been thus in the Alcheringa.

Just before dusk two Okilias go out and stand, one on the eastern end of each of the raised banks, with their arms in a somewhat curious attitude, the palm of the hand being turned so that it faces backward, and the elbow bent so that the hand lies in the armpit. The Uranthantina man goes and sits down in the place usually occupied by the Wurtja when he is watching a ceremony while the other men, seated around him, sing—"Elunja apirra arara"—"hark to the lizards in the trees." At a signal from an old mūra man the women, who are waiting out of sight, come and stand in two groups one to the right and one to the left of the Apulla. It may be mentioned that in the grouping of the men and women there is no separation of those belonging to different classes. As soon as the women arrive, the two Okilias who are stationed on the banks run off to the Wurtja's brake and quickly tear away the bushes which hide him from view so that he is seen crouching down. One of the Okilias then kneels down on each side of him and at once the three men run quickly, on all fours, to the Apulla where the Wurtja lies down on top of the Urinthantina, who is himself lying down on his back, and the two remain in this position for about ten minutes. While this is taking place a woman who is

Mia to the Wurtja comes and sits down behind one of the Oknia and two others sit behind two other Oknia. At the same time the men who have brought in the Arachitta poles and are about to wear these attached to their legs are busily engaged, with the assistance of other men and some of the women, in fastening them on. At the end of the ten minutes the Urinthantina wriggles out from underneath the Wurtja who remains lying, face downwards, on the ground. The old Ipmunna stands close by explaining the design on the back of the Wurtja, and after a time calls up two women who are Ipmunna to the Wurtja to come and rub out the design; they come forward reluctantly, and one after the other stoop down and with their foreheads efface the drawing. The men with the Arachitta poles are now ready and come on to the Apulla. Dancing and singing begin at once, the men carrying the poles attached to their ankles run up and between the banks of the Apulla, while the women follow them about stripping the poles of their leaves. It is now dark, and the only light is that given out by a big fire which has been made by heaping the two brakes on top of one another and then setting fire to the whole mass. The Wurtja looking on sits between the legs of an Okilia, and the scene is one, as can be imagined, of the weirdest description. Suddenly the old mūra man gives out a great roar, whereupon the dancing ceases and the women quickly run off, followed by menacing shouts from the men. At the same time the sound of bullroarers is heard coming from each side of the Apulla, and at this signal the Wurtja is laid down on his back and some of the Oknia and Okilia men taking up a number of the Arachitta poles stack them on top of him, and, lifting them up and down as if beating time with them on his body, they all sing wildly—

“Ingwa alkirna alkirnie li  
Urtnathie alkirlie impara.”

Ingwa means night or darkness; Alkirna, twilight; Alkirnie li, a great clear light; Urtnanthie, a lot of trees growing close together; Alkirlie, like the sky; Impara, rising red like the sun.

The fire is now giving out a brilliant light and the two Atwia-twia men take up a position close to it at the spot marked D on the diagram. With their beards thrust into



their mouths, their legs widely extended, and their arms stretched forwards the two men stand perfectly still, the actual operator in front and his assistant pressing close up behind him so that their bodies are in contact with each other. The front man holds in his extended right hand the small flint knife with which the operation is to be performed and as soon as they are in position the Ikuntira man who is to act as shield bearer comes down the lines carrying the shield on his head and at the same time snapping the thumb and first finger of each hand. Then, facing the fire, he kneels on one knee, just a little in front of the operator who stands perfectly still. During this time the bullroarers are sounding all round so that they can be heard far away by the women in their camp, and by them it is supposed that the roaring sound is the voice of the great spirit Twanyirika who has come to take the boy away.

The Arachitta poles are now quickly snatched from the top of the body of the Wurtja, and he is at once lifted up by Okilia men who run, carrying him feet foremost, and place him on the shield. Then in deep, loud tones the Lartna song is sung, indeed almost thundered out, by the men :—

“ Irrie yulta yulta rai  
Ul katchera ul katch ar-arai  
Irri yulta yulta rai  
Ul katchera ul katch ai.”

The assisting Atwia-twia at once grasps the fore-skin, pulls it out as far as possible and the operator cuts it off and immediately along with all the officials of the ceremony retires out of the lighted area, while the boy is stood up and held by Oknia and Okilia who say to him, “ you have done well, you have not cried out.” Then he is led back to the old brake where he receives the congratulations of the men, and, at the same time, the blood from the wound is allowed to flow into a shield which is given to him by a young Oknia man to whom afterwards he will have to give food just as he does to his own father.

While he is still bleeding an Okilia man brings up some of the bullroarers and pressing them upon the wound tells him that it was these which made the sound and not Twanyirika, that they are sacred Churinga and must never be shown, or even mentioned,

to the women. To this the boy listens in silence. When the bleeding has diminished he is led to the eastern end of the Apulla where he stands, between two Okilia, looking towards the west while two other Okilia, taking each an Arachitta pole, mount the bank and holding their poles over the middle of the path shout loudly, moving them up and down as they do so, "Arara, arara, arara," which is the signal for the officials to return, which they do, coming up one at a time. As each man comes up the Okilia shouts, "this is Wulya (and so on through the list), do not mention his name," and then each of them embraces the boy in turn, pressing their bodies closely together. As each man comes up, and the presentation is made, the same ceremony is gone through and in turn every one of those who have taken any special part is named by the Okilia whose cry, "Arara. arara, arara," rings out sharply in the darkness, for the fire is now burnt down. When the presentations are over the Okilia produces a bundle of Churinga saying, "here is Twanyirika of which you have heard so much, they are Churinga and will help to heal you quickly, guard them well and do not loose them or you and your mothers and sisters will be killed, do not let them out of your sight or you and your mothers and sisters will be killed, do not let your mothers and sisters see you, obey your Okilia who will go with you, do not eat forbidden meat."<sup>1</sup>

The newly made Arakurta then remains for some time standing by a fire, the smoke of which passes over his wound. Finally he is taken away by a special man in whose charge he has to remain until his wound is healed, when the ceremony of Ariltha will be performed. This man is, if one be available, an unmarried umbirna to whom the boy's sister has been promised. Failing such an one he may be an Oknia, Okilia or a Mūra man.

There are certain restrictions and customs which must be strictly observed by the more immediate blood relations of the

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<sup>1</sup> In the particular ceremony now described, as soon as these instructions had been given to him a man brought on to the ground two young Arakurta who had been operated upon six or seven weeks before. They at once knelt down with their backs to the newly made Arakurta and he, acting on instructions from an Okilia, took a Churinga from his bundle and holding it in both hands, scraped their backs. This is called, "Untungalirrima" and places all three of the Arakurta upon the same footing and makes them friends. The two kneeling Arakurta were then told to go away quickly to their camp. This, of course, does not take place always, but only when two operations have followed closely upon one another.

boy which may be here noticed, as they will serve to show still more clearly the importance which is attached in the native mind to the initiation ceremonies. From the time of the handing of the firesticks until the recovery from the subsequent operation of ariltha the Mia must have no intercourse with the father of the boy until the whole proceedings are at an end. Any breach of this rule would result in the Arakurta growing up into "Ertwa akūrna"—a bad man or "Atna-arpinta," that is too much given to sexual pleasures, while strict observance will ensure his growing up "Ertwa mūra" or a good man (using the words good and bad in the native sense).

After presentation of the firestick and until Lartna has been performed the Mūra tūalcha woman (that is the future mother-in-law of the boy) is "ekirinja" that is tabu, to the actual Mia of the latter. When Lartna has been performed the Mūra tūalcha woman goes to the camp of the Mia, and approaching her behind, rubs her all over with red ochre, and the Mia hands to the other woman a pitchi full of seed and in this way the tabu is removed.

While the Arakurta is out in the bush the Mia may not eat opossum or the large lace lizard, or carpet snake, nor any fat, as otherwise she will retard her son's recovery.

Every day she greases her "yam" sticks and never allows them out of her sight; at night time she sleeps with them close to her head. No one is allowed to touch them. Every day she is most careful to rub her body with grease and red ochre which in some way is supposed to help her son's recovery.

After the operation of Lartna the fore-skin is handed over to the boy's Okilia—the oldest one present—who also takes charge of the shield in the haft of which the blood has been collected. The piece of skin is greased by the Okilia and given to a young man who is Witia (younger brother) of the Arakurta and he is told to swallow it, the idea being that it will strengthen him and cause him to grow tall and strong. The shield is taken by the Okilia to his camp where he hands it over to his Unawa or wife who rubs the blood over the breasts and foreheads of women who are Mia Alkulla (that is elder sisters of the boy's actual mother) and Ungaraitcha (elder sisters) of the boy. These women must not on any account touch the blood with their

hands, and after it has been rubbed on them the women adds a coating of red ochre. The actual Mia of the Arakurta is never allowed to see the blood.

When the Arakurta is out in the bush the men go and visit him occasionally and on these occasions he has to undergo a painful rite called "Koperta kakuma" or head biting. He is placed lying face downwards, men of all classes sitting round him singing about the biting of the head of the Arakurta and urging the biters to bite deeply. The men who are to do the biting and who may be of any class and are usually from two to five in number are chosen, on each occasion on which the operation is carried out, by the eldest Okilia of the youth. Their duty is to bite the boy's scalp as hard as they can and until blood flows freely, the patient often howling with pain. Each man may content himself with one bite or he may bite two or even three times. The object of this really painful operation is, so they say, to promote the growth of hair and at times the chin may be bitten as well as the scalp.

### The Ceremony of Subincision.

As a general rule there is an interval of between five and six weeks between the ceremony of Lartna and that of Ariltha, but at times it may be even longer and it depends upon the time occupied by the recovery of the boy from the effects of the first operation.

The particular ceremony which is now described took place when the operation was performed upon two Arakurta one of whom belonged to the Purula and the other to the Kumara class, and was carried out in the northern part of the tribe. It must always be remembered that the details of all the ceremonies vary to a certain extent in different parts of the tribe, though the essential features are similar.

When the ceremony is to take place the men assemble at the spot where the two boys have been camped after the operation of Lartna. The boys are under the charge of an Okilia, who tells them to lie flat down upon the ground, and covers over their heads, all the young men who are of the same classes as the

two Arakurta also lying down. The men of the Panunga and Bultharra classes sing about the marching of the Achilpa or "wild cat" men in the Alcheringa. During the night, first of all, a quabarra dealing with the doings of certain Achilpa men and afterwards one concerned with the Emu totem are performed by men who are specially concerned with them. These performances are, as usual, explained to the Arakurta, who are once more cautioned against ever telling any woman what they have seen and heard; they are now also told that the Quabarra belong to men of particular local groups who alone have the right to perform them. Then they are made to lie down again and the old men go away to a brake of boughs which has been built at a distance of about fifty yards and here they begin to sing songs concerned with certain totems such as the Quirra or Bandicoot. During the previous day an old Panunga man has made a special pole which is called a "Nurtunja" and which consists of a large spear ensheated with human hair string and decorated with rings of bird's down. In addition a small number of Churinga are hung on to it. The old man who has made it is Unkulla of one of the youths and Ganmona of the other, and he has been asked by the Oknia and Okilia of the two boys to make the sacred pole. He has at the same time been asked to perform a ceremony, and at day-break the two Arakurta are brought from their camp to watch the performance. The old man carries the Nurtunja on his back and, sitting down on the ground, is another man who carries small bushes in his hands. The one with the Nurtunja represents a Quirra (bandicoot) man of the Alcheringa who is attempting to catch a woman and she is supposed to be warding him off with the bushes. The audience, including the two Arakurta, dance in front of and under the Nurtunja, and finally the old Quirra man fixes the pole upright in the ground and the Arakurta are told, as usual by Oknia and Okilia, to go and embrace the Nurtunja and while doing so are informed that they are about to undergo the rite of Ariltha, and that the embracing of the Nurtunja will prevent the operation from being painful. The Okilia now says, "who will be Tapunga?" Two men volunteer, one a Panunga and the other an Ungalla. The former at once lies down on his stomach and the latter gets on top of him, the two lying at the foot of the

Nurtunja. Then the Kumara Arakurta is laid down on them and a man sits straddle-legged over his body, while the operation is at once performed by an Uknaria man who is Ikuntira of the Arakurta. The actual operation which is performed with a stone knife only occupies a very short time, and consists, as has often been described, in slitting up more or less completely the penile urethra. As soon as the first Arakurta has been operated upon the second one is led up, placed on top of the same Tapunga men and quickly operated on. Then they are taken to one side and the blood which flows from their wounds is allowed to drain into shields on which they squat. They are now no longer Arakurta but Ertwa-kurka or initiated men.

When the Arakurta is seized for the purpose of having the rite of Ariltha performed on him the men set up a loud and prolonged shout of "pirr-rr" which can be heard by the women at the camp. They at once assemble at the Erlukwirra, that is the women's camp, and the Mia of the boy cuts the Unchalkukna woman across the stomach and shoulders and then makes similar cuts upon women who are the boy's mura, elder and younger sisters, as well as upon those who are her own elder sisters. While making the cuts she imitates the sound made by the Ariltha party. These particular cuts which usually leave a definite series of cicatrices are called "urpma" and are often represented by definite lines on certain of the Churinga.

It very often happens that as soon as the operation on an Arakurta has been performed one or more of the younger men present, but who have been operated on before, stand up and voluntarily undergo a second ariltha operation. In such cases the men do not consider that the incision has been carried far enough. Standing out on the clear space upon which the Arakurta has been operated upon, with legs wide apart and hands behind his back, the man shouts out "Mura ariltha atnartinja yinga aritchika pitchi"—"Mura mine, come and cut my ariltha down to the root." Then one mura man comes and pinions him behind while another mura man comes up in front and seizing the penis, first of all cuts out an oval-shaped piece of skin which he throws away, and then extends the split to the root. Most men undergo the second operation, and some come forward a third time, though a man is often as old as thirty or

thirty-five before he submits to this second operation which is called "ariltha erlitha atnartinja."

The boy carries the Churinga about with him until he has completely recovered. When this is announced by the man in charge of him the men all assemble out in the bush and the Oknia and Okilia, after consultation, appoint a man to act as what is called "Irkoa-artha." It is his duty to remove all the decorations from the body of the Ertwa-kurka, after which has been done the youth is told to lie down on his face while the men sing a chant which is supposed to promote the growth of his hair, and he is told that he must not speak to the "Irkoa-artha" until some time has elapsed, and not then before he has made a present of food, which is called Chauarilya, to the individual in question.

When this has been done the men and the Ertwa-kurka assemble at some little distance from the main camp and begin to sing in loud tones—

"Chuk-ur-rokerai yaa li chaakaa-a  
Yaama kank waa-a  
Inkwurkna inkwurkna atnai  
Inkwurkna inkwurkna atnai."

The lubras hearing the singing assemble near the main camp and begin to dance as they did at the Apulla. The song of the men ceases as soon as they approach the lubras, and at a distance of about fifty yards they halt, shouting "tirra, tirra, tirra," a sound which resembles that of whirling bullroarers, and which is taken up by the lubras. The young Ertwa-kurka, who is now completely undecorated, steps out from the men, runs close up to the dancing women and suddenly wheels round and runs off into the bush where he is followed by a number of men who camp with him for the night, during which, without the performance of any special ceremony, singing is kept up. Before day-break the Ertwa-kurka is dressed up by Okilia and Umbirna with all the ornaments such as forehead band, arm strings, tufts of alpita tail tips, etc., such as are worn by a native beau. He is also provided with a shield and spear-thrower, and at daylight the party starts for the main camp, the young man walking in the centre by the side of his "Irkoa-

artha" while all shout loudly "tirra, tirra, tirra." When within about fifty yards of the women who are dancing and shouting as before, the men stop and the "Irkoa-artha" leads the Ertwa-kurka out but only accompanies him for a few yards, after which he goes on alone carrying his shield in front of him so as to hide his face, and when close to the women one or two Ungaraitcha (elder sisters) who are in the lead carrying pitchis (all the other women carry tufts of alpita in their hands), throw the pitchis at his shield and then press their hands on his shoulders from behind and also rub their faces on his back, after which they cut off some locks of his hair which they afterwards use to make up into hair-string ornaments for themselves. This ceremony is called "Anainthalilima," and after it is over the Ertwa-kurka is free to go into the presence of the various officials who have taken a special part in the ceremonies, though he must not speak to or of them, nor must he speak loudly in their presence for some months to come.

The ceremonies concerned with this part of the proceedings vary considerably in different parts of the tribe. In the south for example the young Ertwa-kurka is always shown a sacred ceremony of the "Akirra" or owl totem, on the night preceding the one on which he meets the women.

At daylight on the morning of the next day the men provide themselves with firesticks, and surrounding the young man conduct him to the lubras who are again waiting to receive him. The young man is fully decorated and carries a shield and boomerang and some twigs of *Eremophila*. When the party is within a short distance of the lubras the men throw down their firesticks and halt, and the young man steps out from the centre of the group and throws his boomerang high up in the direction of the spot at which his mother was supposed to have lived in the Alcheringa.<sup>1</sup> Then he is led forwards by the

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<sup>1</sup> This throwing of the boomerang in the direction of the mother's Alcheringa camp occurs during the performance of other ceremonies such, for example, as those which accompany the knocking out of teeth in eastern groups of the Arunta tribe, and also in the Ipirra tribe, and may be regarded as intended to symbolize the idea that the young man is entering upon manhood and passing out of the control of the women and into the ranks of the men. The fact that he is using the boomerang is indicative of this and his throwing it towards his mother's camp is an intimation to her of the fact that he is passing away from her control.



“Irkao-aritha” man, holding his shield before his face, and is placed squatting upon a fire which has been smothered with green leaves which the lubras have prepared, and behind which they stand, shouting “tirra, tirra, tirra,” and making with their hands the movement of invitation already referred to. The Ertwa-kurka is then pressed down gently on the fire by the women, and after remaining in this position for a few minutes is taken off by the “Irkao-aritha” man, and handed over to a few young boys who have not yet been initiated, and who are told to camp with him but on no account to speak to him. After three days during which he speaks to no one, men who are his Okilia come out from the Ungunja and invite him to come and join them after which he becomes a permanent member of the Ungunja or men’s camp. Before, however, he may speak to any of the officials who took part in the ceremony he has to go out into the bush and procure game as an offering to each one of them—this gift being called “Chauarilya.”

At the presentation of “Chauarilya” the man to whom it is presented always performs some sacred ceremony, after which the mouth of the Arakurta and of all those who are present is touched with some sacred object which has been used in the ceremony, such as a Nurtunja, and in this way the ban of silence is removed. When these ceremonies have been passed through the native is regarded as an initiated member of the tribe and may take part in all the sacred ceremonies of his group, though it is not until he has passed through the Engwurra that he becomes what is called Urliara or a fully developed man.

The following names indicating the different grades of initiation are applied to the boy, youth and man at the times indicated :

- (1). *Ambaquerka*, up to the time of throwing up.
- (2). *Ulpmerka*, after throwing up and until circumcision is performed.
- (3). *Arakurta*, after circumcision and before subincision is performed.
- (4). *Ertwa-kurka*, after subincision and until he has passed through the Engwurra.
- (5). *Urliara*, after the Engwurra has been passed through.